

HEADING AWAY ON A BREAK?

A practical rundown of the things leaders often find most helpful to wrap up before the break.

YOUR PEOPLE

Final 1:1s

Connect with each person in your team and ask:

- What are you proud of this year?
- What stretched you?
- What would help you finish well?

Leave cover

Is everyone clear about leave, who's around, who's acting, and what genuinely needs attention over the break.

Bring team together

Bring the team together for a short end-of-year meeting.

- What worked well for us this year?
- What helped us stay connected under pressure?
- What do we want to carry forward into next year?

YOUR SYSTEMS

Team

Look at your team rhythms for next year. Are the right 1:1s, team meetings, planning points, and reviews already in the calendar?

Team spaces

Lightly tidy shared folders or drives. Just enough so January feels workable.

Budgets/Forecasts

- Glance at your budget and forecast. Note any early decisions or pressures you'll want to prepare for.
- Check any compliance or audit requirements due soon and make sure someone is holding them while you're away.

YOUR WORK PROGRAMME

Take stock

Look at what is sitting with your team.

- Notice what's wrapped up,
- What carries over?
- Anything that needs a fresh approach next year?

Decisions with you?

For decisions still sitting with you, note where each one is at and when you want to return to it.

Look ahead

Look ahead to January–March.

- What will need early attention so it doesn't arrive as a surprise?
- Check any reporting or cyclical requirements during the break, and make sure someone is holding them.

FUTURE YOU

Reflect

- How do I want to return in January?
- What will help me land well?
- Is there anything I'm overlooking?

New Year Priorities

Three things that matter most when you come back. Add anything future-you would appreciate not having to rediscover.

Life logistics

Consider blocking out now events like...

- First days of school,
- Public holidays,
- Any annual leave you have planned already
- Childcare changes etc.

YOUR CONTEXT

Stakeholders

- Consider who you'll want to reconnect with early next year.
- Send a short thank-you note to key partners. Keep it human and simple.
- If any relationships feel stretched or unclear, jot down a thought about how you might reset or realign when you return.

Risk, Issues & Governance

- Note any risks or issues that have surfaced recently. Capture where your attention will be needed next year.
- Think about where you'd like more clarity or assurance when you're back.
- If major decisions are scheduled early next year, decide whether to share early thinking now or simply set the expectation for when you'll contribute.

YOUR TIME

Set up your diary

- Set yourself up for a steady first week. Protect some thinking and connection time.
- Make sure key dates and cycles are already in place.

Your leadership

- Choose one leadership practice for January. Something small and workable that supports how you want to show up.
- Write a short note to your January self. A few lines on what to start with and what you can let go of.
- Finish the year with one small act of closure. Clear something, tidy something, or name something so you can truly switch off.